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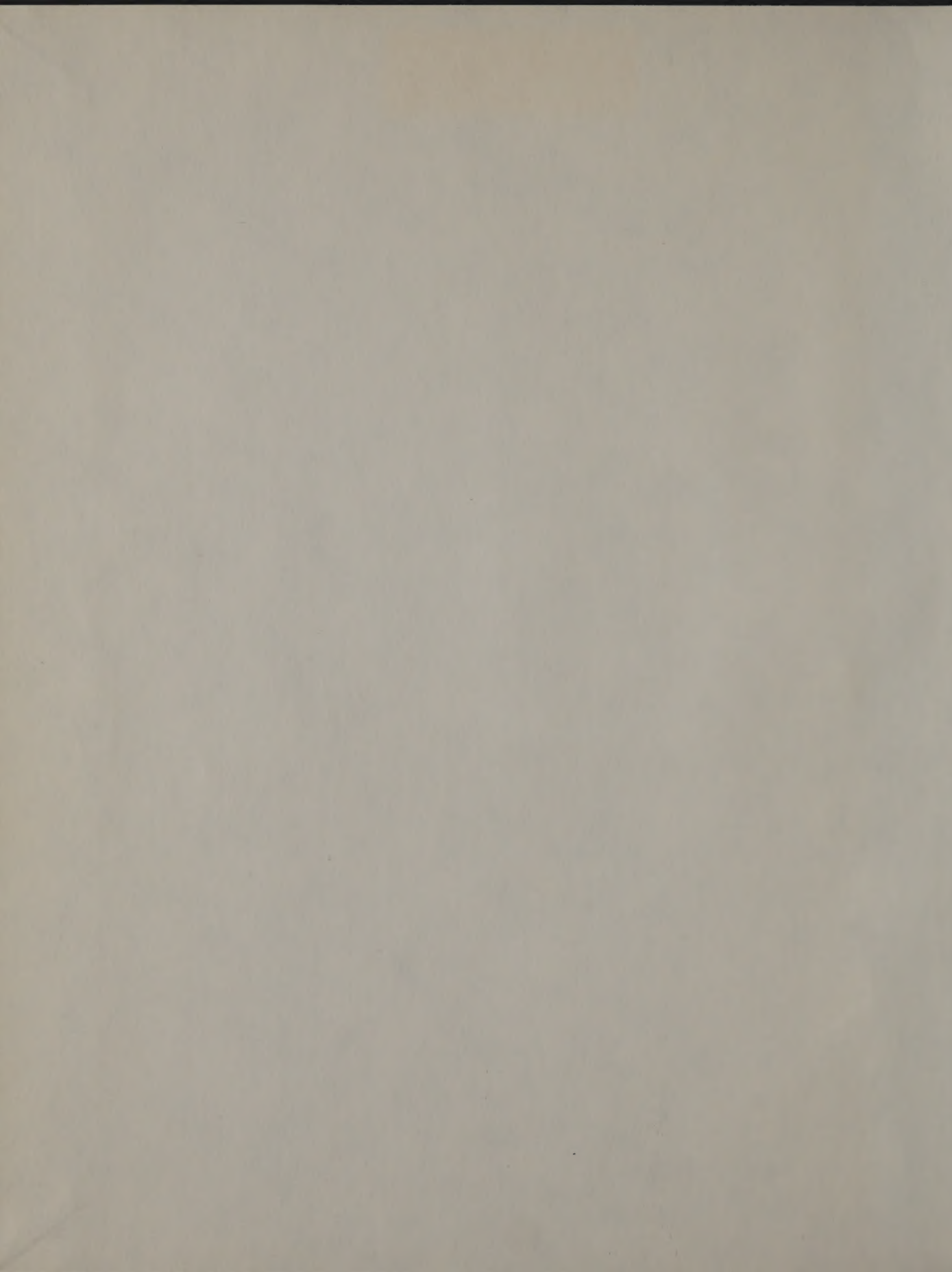
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GENEALOGICAL PUBLICATIONS  
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THE NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Genealogical Research Among  
Pennsylvania German and Huguenot Families  
Vol. 1

By

Charles R. Roberts

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Washington, D. C.  
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By

Charles R. Roberts

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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH AMONG PENNSYLVANIA  
GERMAN AND HUGUENOT FAMILIES

By Charles R. Roberts

(Address delivered before the National Genealogical Society, Washington, D. C., April 2, 1932).

I became interested in genealogy in 1892. I saw a booklet issued by the Lehigh Valley Railroad giving some history of the towns along its lines and the old families. Of my mother's family it said, "The Rhoads family is descended from a noted Swiss gentleman possessed of brilliant attainments and wealth, who settled here about 1688." This aroused my interest and when I went to Philadelphia on some business I went to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. There I consulted histories and became interested in my ancestors. Finding one day a draft of a deed among my great-great-grandfather's papers, which he had drawn up for the Leisenring family, naming all the heirs, I made a chart of it, and showed it to a Leisenring relative of mine. Through this I began to collect data of the Leisenring family and Mrs. John S. Wentz, a born Leisenring, herself worth a million and her husband a multimillionaire coal baron, employed me. When she inquired how much I wanted, I said, "Six dollars a day." She replied, "It won't pay you, Mr. Roberts". After this experience I began to broaden out, consulted old tombstones and interviewed old people, some born between 1790 and 1800.

You may ask, "What is a Pennsylvania German?" A Pennsylvania German is a descendant of the Germans and Swiss who settled in Pennsylvania between 1683 and 1770. They are not Pennsylvania Dutch. The word Dutch comes from the German word Deutsch which means German.

The Crefeld Colony under Pastorius settled in Germantown in 1683; Johannes Kelpius, with forty Pietists, came in 1691. In 1704 Daniel Falckner brought a number with him on his return trip after a visit to the Fatherland. In 1708 a number of members of the German Reformed faith residing be-





tween Wolfenbuettel and Halberstadt, fled to Newwied and then to Holland and in 1707 sailed for New York. Their ship was carried into Delaware Bay and they eventually settled along the Musconetung and Passaic rivers in New Jersey, in what is now known as the German Valley. In 1708 the Kocherthal colony came to New York, assisted by Queen Anne of England, most of whom afterwards came to Pennsylvania. I know of two who settled in Lehigh County. In 1709, a colony of Swiss, principally Mennonite, settled in Lancaster county. In this year, an unknown writer, in a pamphlet published in 1711 gives the total arrivals in 1709 as 18,312 from the Palatinate, Darmstadt, Hanover, Mayntz, Trier, Speyer, Worms, Hesse, Zweibruecken, Nassau, Alsace, Baden and other places. Zweibruecken, meaning two bridges in German, was formerly a duchy of the same name and on the French side of the river it was called Deux Ponts.

In September 1727, three ships arrived at Philadelphia with 303 Palatines. Between 1708 and 1720, thousands arrived. The passage of a registration act in 1727 required every arrival to sign allegiance to the King of England and from then on until 1775 all emigrants' names are recorded. During these years 321 ships arrived with over thirty thousand Germans. Governor Thomas of Pennsylvania estimated the number of Germans in the Province in 1747 as 72000. Many Swiss and inhabitants of Lorraine were included among the Germans. It is not too much to believe that sixty per cent of the inhabitants of the United States have German blood in their veins, owing to intermarriages with descendants of other races. The Pennsylvania Germans have spread to every state. Thousands went west and settled in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. Very early, many settled in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Jost Hite settled in the Shenandoah Valley in 1732 with a number of other families. A Henry Roth settled in Hampshire County, Virginia, about 1770, coming from Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

The Allemanni, who razed the Roman legions, were the progenitors of many of the Pennsylvania Germans. They occupied the territory between the Main and the Danube, beyond the Upper Rhine into Alsace and Lorraine and southward into Switzerland. In the twelfth century the political



# THE HISTORY OF THE

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the human race. It is a history of the progress of the human mind, of the growth of human knowledge, of the development of human civilization. It is a history of the human spirit, of the human soul, of the human heart. It is a history of the human race, of the human world, of the human future.

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State of the Palatinate was formed under the royal house of Hohenstaufen. Prince Conrad was invested with the electoral dignity by his brother, the Emperor Frederick I. It remained a distinct realm for seven hundred years, until 1801. By the treaty of Luneville, dictated by Napoleon, the Rhenish Palatinate was parcelled out between Hesse, Darmstadt, Baden, Leinigen-Tachsburg and Nassau.

During the thirty-years war the Palatinate was almost devastated. Population was reduced from 500,000 to 50,000. Twelve hundred towns and villages were burned. It was from this section that discouraged Germans went, full of hope, to look for homes in a new land.

Pennsylvania harbored all sects. Lutherans, Reformed, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Mennonites, Moravians, Tunkers, Schwenkfelders, Seventh-day Baptists, Separatists, Boehmists, Tuffelders, Wonnwuencher, the Solitaires at Ephrata, Labeledists, Jews, heathen, etc. The Mennonites first settled in Germantown, then spread out into Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, and Lehigh counties. A group settled in Lancaster county and spread out into York, Cumberland and Lebanon counties. The Moravians, by way of Georgia, located at Nazareth, Bethlehem, Emmaus and Lititz. The Schwenkfelders, in 1735, settled along the Perkiomen creek, in Montgomery county, where their descendants reside. The Lutherans and Reformed settled in Bucks, Montgomery, Lancaster, York, Lebanon, Berks, Lehigh and Northampton counties and became the most aggressive of the German element.

Many of the early Germans were learned men. Pastorius, a scholar, enjoyed the society of Thomas Lloyd, the President of the Pennsylvania Provincial Council, and was a school teacher, land agent and a member of the Provincial Assembly. William Rittenhouse was the building of the first paper mill and the progenitor of David Rittenhouse, astronomer, philosopher and patriot. Kelpius, who lived in a cave on the Wissahickon, had been the favorite student of Dr. Fabricius at the University of Altdorf. Koester composed the first Latin work written in Pennsylvania. Christopher Saur, in 1743, printed the first bible in any European language printed in North America.

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# GENEALOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

Among the Pennsylvania Germans in Northampton County who were prominent in colonial times were Peter Tremler, one of the first county commissioners in 1762; Ludwig Ritting, Member of the Assembly, 1758 to 1760; Lewis Kiots, Conrad Hess, George Rex, Jacob Arndt, Jacob and Isaac Lorch, Christopher Wagner, John Wetzel, Felix Lynn and Henry Koken of Holland ancestry, Justices of the Peace; Henry Geiger, Justice of the Peace, Ensign in the French and Indian War and Colonel in the Revolution; Christian Ricker and Jacob Rex, County Commissioners and John Hinner, Sheriff from 1786 to 1788.

Revin worked, as I mentioned, on the Telecurius family. I found that one of the daughters married John Grob. I looked out the Grob family and found an old bible that Henry Grob died in 1766. Some one in Illinois wanted to know of what disease he died. I did not know. Later I came across the diary of a surveyor and in it he said "Der Heinrich Grob, der Schweitzer Parwisin der Mann ist gestorben an eenterstehen." Here was the answer, he died of pleurisy. But the translator had it: "Henry Grob, the hired man of the Swiss Parwisen, died of pleurisy." An "the Swiss Parwisen" did not make sense, I studied this over and found that there had been a Swiss minister named Midweiler, who had died. Henry Grob's wife had also died and Grob married Midweiler's widow. In Pennsylvania German, it is the feminine ending and parw being the Pennsylvania German word for minister, Schweitzer Parwisin was the Swiss minister's wife and Grob was her husband.

Many times have I searched and inquired for old church records. Sometimes I have found them in possession of the pastor, or of a deacon or elder, or even the organist or janitor. Often they were in the church in a little cupboard under the pulpit or altar, with no protection from fire. Two of our church records were burned, those of the Diegel church in Weisenberg township, so called because it originally had a tile roof, destroyed when the church was first struck by lightning, it having been struck three times and destroyed each time. The other record burned was that of the New Tripoli church, which was destroyed when the hotel, where they were kept was burned. The Heidelberg Reformed church records are missing although I saw them about 18



years ago. The Indianland church records are also missing, which I saw 21 years ago. This church is in Lehigh township, Northampton County. The Kutztown church records, of Kutztown, Berks County, are also missing.

It is a great pity that old church records are not better cared for. They are the only means, at times, by which we can trace some of the early settlers. If a man owned no property, yet he usually was a member of a church and there his children were baptized.

Often children had four or six sponsors. I found one case, in 1780, when, Daniel, son of Daniel and Sophia Trowell, was baptized, he had eight sponsors; Jacob Wirth, Henry Dorny, Christian Steininger, Conrad Dotterer, Catherine Elizabeth Kern, Salome Geth, Julia Newhard and Apollonia Gochler.

The early ministers often used Latin in abbreviations. One matter which I have worked out, I do not think has ever been mentioned or published. These early ministers used other names for the months than the names given to us by the Romans, except for February. January was Wintermonat, the winter month; February's name was Hornung; March was Fruehlingsmonat, the spring month, April was Keimmonat, the germ or bud month, May was Freudemonat, the month of delight; June was Brachmonat, the fallow month; July was Heu- monat, hay month; August was Ernte- monat, the harvest month; September was Herbstmonat, the vintage month; October was Weinmonat, wine month; November was Windmonat, wind month; and December was Christmonat, the month of Christ. Often have I seen that a child was born on a certain day in the Brachmonat or the Heu- monat. These names were brought with them from Germany.

In investigating we depend upon wills, orphans' court records, deeds, church records, tombstones and family bibles. It is often very difficult to find from what town in Germany or elsewhere the emigrant ancestor came. Sometimes we find the town mentioned on a tombstone, in the church records or in a family bible. These cases are not frequent. Rarely is the birthplace mentioned in a will.

Lehigh County was taken out of Northampton County in 1812. Northampton once included Lehigh, Monroe, Carbon and Luzerne counties. It was created in 1752 out of Bucks and



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## GENEALOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

created in 1752 out of Philadelphia county. Montgomery county was also taken out of Philadelphia county in 1764. I have covered in my researches, Bucks, Northampton, Lehigh, Berks, Montgomery, Carbon, Monroe, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Schuylkill, Northumberland, Union, Cumberland, and Westmoreland counties. I have visited the county seats of Easton, Allentown, Doylestown, Norristown, Reading, Philadelphia, York, Carlisle, Stroudsburg, Sunbury, Williamsport and Greentown. The most wonderful place to find data, for me, has been the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. There are large manuscript collections, which, however, take a great deal of time to examine. One of the best collections of historical works in our section is found in the Easton Public Library. Our State Library also has a fine collection. The New York Public Library also has a wonderful genealogical section and the New York Historical Society has a large collection of manuscripts.

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Kichline was the outstanding military man in Northampton county in the Revolution. It was he that saved the day at the battle of Long Island and prevented a greater loss. He was wounded in that battle, taken prisoner and on December 29, 1776, signed a parole. Jacob Arndt, born in Germany in 1725, died in 1806, was captain of a company in the Indian Wars of 1756 and 1757, became a Major, was a civil officer in the Revolution, Provincial Councillor, member of the Constitutional Convention of 1776, of the Supreme Executive Council, and of the Assembly. His son, John Arndt, was a captain in the Revolution. Members of the Northampton County Committee of Safety were Anthony Lersch, Melchior Hay, Jacob Hubler, born in Tramm, Canton of Bern, Switzerland, Captain Casper Doll, Gratius or Pancratius Lersch, Michael Hussinger, Peter Bender, Captain Edward Shiner, Jeremiah Trezier, Andrew Raub, Cornelius Waymndt, and Christopher Wagner, also a Justice of the Peace. Henry Lawall was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Revolution.

Prominent men of Pennsylvania German blood have been John Wamemaker, John Fritz, Iron master, George F. Baer, President of the Reading Railroad, William G. Hensel, Attorney General of Pennsylvania, Henry C. Fritz, Minister, Cross, Leidy and Parper, in medicine, the late Secretary of War





## PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN AND HUGUENOT FAMILIES 7

James W. Good, and I recall among those living, Gen. H. C. Trexler, B. F. Fackenthal, Jr., iron master, the Seiberlings, tire manufacturers, Henry Dubbs, a lawyer of Colorado, and our own president, one of whose ancestors resided in my own county, Lehigh.

When Dr. D. H. Keller, then of Louisiana, now of Pennsylvania, was writing a history of the Keller family of Monroe county, he wrote me, "I can not finish the history until you translate the tombstone inscription of my ancestor." I went to Monroe county and the inscription read: "Hier ruhet in Gott der ewig blasse Leichnam des verstorbenen Christophel Keller," etc. "Here rests in God the lifeless body of the deceased Christophel Keller". It was the first time I had ever seen the word "verblasse" used in German theology on a tombstone. Here were three words practically meaning the same thing, "lifeless", "body", and "deceased". It might have read: "Here rests in God Christophel Keller," or "Here rests in God the lifeless body of Christophel Keller," or "Here rests in God the deceased Christophel Keller", but all three of the words were used.

In Plainfield township is buried Joseph Keller and his wife, Engel. She was born in 1718 and died in 1802. On September 15, 1787, she was captured by Indians and taken to Montreal, Canada. She returned October 20, 1790. Her eldest son, Christian, was killed by Indians. Her son, Joseph, born 1761, was captured by Indians, and returned in 1785, and her son, John Jacob, born 1764, was captured by Indians, but never returned.

In Kreidersville cemetery is buried Michael Sebastian, died in 1780. On his wife's tombstone her name is spelled Bastian and in the records his name and the names of his children are written Bastian.

In one graveyard is buried George Roth, born in Alsace in 1664, died in 1769, aged 104 years and 11 months. In the Salisbury cemetery, near Allentown, is buried Heinrich Roth, born in 1668, but the epitaphs and records of over 100 years have erased the year of



## GENEALOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

his death. His son's wife is buried next to him. Anna Margeret Roth, died November 22, 1746, aged 13 years and 4 months. She was the daughter of Egidius Grim and had one son. This is the oldest stone I have found in a Reformed or Lutheran cemetery. In the Moravian cemetery at Emaus, is the oldest tombstone I have found in Lehigh county, number No. 1, G. Moa. died 1745.

In the Bethlehem Moravian cemetery is buried Taseop, a Mohican Indian, baptized John at Shekumeko, April 6, 1742, died August 29, 1746. In the same cemetery is the stone of "John Ross, son of John Ross, Indian chief. His body was shipped by Adams Express from St. Louis." Alan, "Samuel Sidney Smith, born April 26, 1814, in Bethlehem. Died February 13, 1819, aged five years. How does our Savior look? Right Clean, was his reply." At Unionville is buried Margaret Watring, daughter of Henry Frantz, who was killed by Indians. His daughter was born in Europe in 1745, and died in 1823. When twelve years of age, in September, 1757, she was captured by Indians, lived with them seven years and after her return often rode miles on horseback to doctor the sick with her knowledge of Indian herbs and simples. In one cemetery is a stone which has at the base the words "Put up by me, Capt. Carr."

Early marriages are difficult to find among Pennsylvania German families. The church records contain principally the baptism of children. Some contain a few marriages and deaths. Sometimes one finds a record with a full list of early marriages and deaths. This is a find. Hill Church, in Berks county, and one other church, have records which contain sketches of the first members, very valuable to us. Deaths, if no stone is found, are established by a will or occasionally found in old German newspapers. The records of Toltichen church, in Bucks county, have been published, as have also the records of the First Reformed church in Easton, the Eastern Calistacy church, Lehigh county, and the Egypt Reformed church records, Lehigh county, in the Fifth Series of the Pennsylvania Archives,





## PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN AND HUGUENOT FAMILIES

translated by myself. The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania has quite a number of translations of church records, as well as some photostat copies.

In looking up the Huguenot families I have depended upon Stapelton's "Memorials of the Huguenots", and church records, giving at times the place of birth of the ancestor. The Woodring or Wotring family came from Lorraine, where the name was Vautrin. Abraham came in 1733 and Nicholas and Samuel came later. Paul Salist came from Schalbach, Lorraine in 1738. His son, Stephen was a Lieutenant Colonel in command of his regiment at the battle of Brandywine. John Philip Tesquesau came in 1764 and died in 1790, aged 90. The name is now spelled Waseos.

John Jacob Mickley came to America in 1733 with a number of Swiss who settled in Lehigh county. The name was written Muekli, Michelet and now Mickley. Two of his children were killed by Indians. Christian Rabelet came with Mickley. There is a history of this family, which has been published, not long ago. Jean Jordan, from France, settled in Hunterdon county, N. J., where his son, Frederick, born in 1744, had two grist mills. They are the ancestors of the well known Jordan family of Pennsylvania. Henry Laux, from the Province of Bearn, was in the Lehigh valley as early as 1766. Ludwig or Louis Baros settled prior to 1740 in Macungie township, with his wife, Konigunda. Nicholas and Jacob Bacher were in Lynn township in 1782. John Daniel Jacquet was a schoolmaster in Allentown in 1783. The Dorney family is descended from Henry and Daniel Tournet, who settled in Northampton county about 1743.

Graff is an old Huguenot name, mentioned as early as 1541. Jacob Graff, from Kusendorf, Lower Alsace, arrived at Philadelphia October 15, 1704. His son, George Graff, a captain in the Revolution, was my great great grandfather. The Cleveland family, formerly Chavell, settled in Northampton county. John Franz Cleveland is descendering from. He was born September 24, 1700 in Kusendorf, Lower Alsace. My grandparents were French Protestants, who fled from Dauphine, France, with

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translated by myself. The Genealogical Society of  
America has given a number of translations of  
the records, as well as some photographs.

In looking up the Hungarian families I have been  
guided by the "Memories of the Hungarians"  
and church records, giving the place of birth  
of the ancestor. The location of the family came  
from the records, where the name was written. Among  
them in 1788 and 1789 and 1790 were Peter, Paul  
and John from Szabolcs, Hungary in 1788. His  
son, Stephen, was a Lieutenant Colonel in command of  
his regiment at the battle of Berezina. John Philip  
Szabolcs came in 1790 and died in 1795, aged 50. The  
name is not spelled as such.

John Jacob Miskolc came to America in 1788 with a  
number of wives was settled in Litchfield Co. The name  
was written Miskolc, Miskolc and now Miskolc. Two of  
his children were killed by Indians. George Miskolc  
was born in 1788. There is a history of this family  
which has been published, now long ago. John Miskolc  
from France, settled in Litchfield County, N. H., where  
his son, Frederick, born in 1794, had two other sons.  
They are the ancestors of the well known Miskolc family  
of Pennsylvania. Henry, son of the Province of  
Massachusetts, was in the family early as 1788. In 1788  
his father sold a plot of land in Massachusetts  
to his son, Miskolc and his  
son, Miskolc, born in 1788. The  
name was written Miskolc  
and Miskolc.

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their children, leaving all their possessions behind. It was quick flight or sure death for them." In 1737 the family came to America. John Michael Lowall, born 1716, died 1796, came to America in 1749 and settled in Bethlehem township, Northampton County. Peter Le Barre, with his brothers, Charles and Abraham settled near the Delaware Water Gap about 1730. George LeBar, grandson of Peter, was born in 1703 and lived to be 111 years old. Samuel Lepoi settled along the Delaware river about 1897. John Lefebvre was an early innkeeper in Forks township, Northampton county. Abraham Tronsau, Isaac Santee, Ambrosius Rameil, John Barteleme, four Leven brothers, Toussaint, Barret, Altemann, Missianz, Boyer, Bairall, Sallad, Rano, Royer, and Kresge and other Huguenot names. A relative wished to have a Huguenot line, but her ancestors all seemed to be of German descent. Finally, I found one whose wife's name was Sheredin. Jacob Girardin, born in Rauweiler in 1725 and died in Berks county in 1820. His name is spelled Schiredin on his tombstone. This was the cousin's ancestor, so she obtained her desire.

The name Kress must be added to the old Pennsylvania German families. A few years ago, Mr. C. W. Kress, President of S. D. Kress and Company, of New York City, was travelling in Germany and met a prominent German, who suggested that he find whether his family was related to the very old family of that name in Germany. Mr. Kress secured the services of Mr. von Frank, of Vienna, Austria, and mine in America.

All we knew was that the ancestor's name was Charles Kress and that he came to America with "three brothers" in 1752. We did not know where he was born. I searched for about three months and finally found a German newspaper of 1784 in which John Kress advertised that he would go to Europe and take letters for half a dollar each and would go up the Rhine to Frankfurt, Hanau, Gelnhausen, Schlouchtern and Steinau on the road, where he was at home. A cablegram of 140 words was at once sent to Mr. von Frank. The family was found at Steinau, traced to Halle, where Thomas

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...leaving all their possessions for  
...I was quick flight or some death for some  
...early came to America. John Michael  
...born 1772, died 1862, came to America in  
...and settled in Washington township, Northampton  
...Peter a son, with his brothers, Charles  
...and Abraham settled near the Delaware Water Gap  
...about 1780. George LeBar, grandson of Peter, was  
...born in 1783 and lived to his 80 years old. Samuel  
...settled along the Delaware river about 1817.  
...John LeBar was an early settler in York town  
...ship, Northampton county. Abraham, Thomas, Isaac  
...George, Amos, John, Peter, William, Robert,  
...brother, Thomas, Peter, Henry, and others  
...Barth, John, and others. A relative named to be a Huguenot  
...line, but later generations of seemed to be of German  
...descent. Finally, I found one whose name was  
...Sturges. Jacob Sturges, born in Germany in 1710  
...and died in York county in 1820. His name is spelled  
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...ancestor, so she obtained her desire.

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...of Austria, whose name is American.

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Kress, a counsellor at law, had the same coat of arms as the Nuremberg family, which was traced back to 1250. At my request a copy of the History of the Kress family was sent to this Society. A thousand copies were printed in English and a thousand copies are now in press in German for the German libraries. The book is not to be sold and its compilation and printing cost over thirty thousand dollars.

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